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exhaustively with the Negro element in Indian culture, will be an eagerly anticipated event.

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A Comparative Study of the Bantu and Semi-Bantu Languages.

By SIR HARRY H. JOHNSTON, G.C.M.G., K.C.B., D.Sc. (Cambs).

Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1919, pp. 815, 2 sketch maps.

The author of this monumental work, in the opinion of the reviewer, is in himself a composite of many of the capacities, which, combined or singly in her subjects have made the greatness of Britain. He has been a great colonial administrator, a distinguished African explorer; he is a talented artist, and has recently astonished the literary world by producing what H. G. Wells declares to be one of the best first novels he has ever read. The contributions of Sir Harry Johnston to the sciences of botany, zoology, and anthropology are truly prodigious. It is in the last named field that his major interests have lain, and a succession of important works have established him as the foremost authority upon the ethnology of Africa and upon the anthropology of the Negro race.

This ponderous volume on the Bantu and Semi-Bantu languages is the first part of a work which represents the fruit of many years of study of multitudinous African languages and dialects. The major portion of the book consists of illustrative vocabularies of 366 Bantu and 87 Semi-Bantu languages and dialects with an extensive bibliography. A competent criticism of this portion of the work can be made by no one but a philologist with a special knowledge of African languages. The present reviewer does not possess these qualifications. Nevertheless it is obvious to any student of Africa that the publication of this work places a mine of useful information at the disposal of the linguist, the grammarian, and the missionary, and will also be invaluable to the student of African ethnology and to the physical anthropologist.

The first chapter sketches the history of research into the Bantu languages. The contributions of various philosophists are appraised.

The second chapter on the distribution and character of the Bantu languages is of greatest interest to the layman and to the general anthropologist. We are informed that the Bantu

languages "constitute a very distinct type of speech which, as contrasted with others amongst the group of Negro tongues, is remarkable as a rule for Italian melodiousness, simplicity and frequency of its vowel sounds, and the comparative ease with which its exemplars can be acquired and spoken by Europeans" (p. 15). "This one Negro language family now covers the whole of the southern third of Africa, with the exception of very small areas in the southwest (still inhabited sparsely by Hottentot and Bushman tribes) and a few patches of the inner Congo basin" (p. 15). Throughout Africa, north of the Bantu border line, the traveller meets with numerous languages widely different and mutually incomprehensible whereas with a knowledge of one Bantu language it is not difficult to understand the structure and even the vocabulary of others. The importance of this language family in Africa is therefore obvious. The author defines clearly the special and peculiar characteristics of Bantu languages. There follows an interesting discussion of the origin and spread of these languages. Probably the parent speech was spoken originally in the very heart of Africa, somewhere between the basins of the Upper Nile, the Bahr-al-g hazal, the Mubangi, and the Upper Benue. The archaic Bantu seem first to have moved eastward, toward the Mountain Nile and the Great Lakes. Probably they remained in the Nile Valley north of the Albert Nyanza "till at least as late as three or four hundred years before Christ—late enough to have been in full possession of goats and oxen and to have received the domestic fowl from Egypt or Abyssinia. They then embarked upon their great career of conquering and colonizing the southern third of Africa" (p. 22).

The original Bantu invaders found before them in Central and South Africa other peoples—Negroes of different types, pygmies, Bushmen, and Hottentots. "The first great Bantu migrations undoubtedly emanated from the vicinity of the Victoria Nyanza and the north Tanganyika, and were directed round and not through the Congo forests" (p. 24). On the basis of linguistic, ethnological and anthropological evidence Sir Harry is led to deduce that at a critical period in their career the Negro speakers of the early Bantu languages were brought under the influence of a semi-Caucasian race from the north or northeast. This contact gave rise to the many handsome-featured pale-skinned castes and ruling clans in so many of the Bantu peoples.

The following statement is of great anthropological importance: "The Bantu-speaking peoples of Africa, . . . do *not* constitute a race apart from the other negroes or offer any homogeneity of physical type. But on the whole they represent so much the average negro type that 'Bantu' is still in favor as a physical definition among craniologists. In reality, they are just fifty millions of Negroes whose speech belongs to one of the many language families of 'Negro type'; only in this case the language family instead of being confined in its range to a hundred villages or two hundred square miles, is spread over the southern third of Africa—say over 3,500,000 square miles—from the Cameroons, the Northern Congo, the Nyanzas, and the Mombasa coast to Cape Colony and Natal" (p. 25), Bantu languages are spoken by peoples of diverse physical types.

"Yet about the Bantu speech and the culture which accompanies it (ordinarily) there is a suggestion, strengthened by the association of these languages with metal working (iron more especially), with agriculture, cultivated plants, and cattle-keeping, that adds to the impression derived from their legends, their religious beliefs, games, and weapons. It is thought that the Bantu language family was finally moulded by some non-Negro incomers of possibly Hamitic affinities, akin at any rate in physique and culture, if not in language, to the dynastic Egyptians, the Galas, and perhaps most of all to those 'Ethiopians' of mixed Egyptian and Negro-Nubian stock that down to one thousand years ago inhabited the Nile basin south of Wadi Halfa and north of Kordofan." (Pp. 25-26.)

Sir Harry attributes most of the higher cultural elements associated with the Bantu languages to the non-Negro invaders. He believes that the Bantu invasions of southern and central Africa cannot be referred back much earlier than the second century B. C., and that the differentiation of the more than two hundred forms of Bantu speech occurred subsequently and rapidly.

To the student of African ethnography this volume is a great disappointment in one respect. The sketch map showing the distribution of Bantu and Semi-Bantu languages is absurdly inadequate. The writer of this review had confidently expected an authoritative large-scale map showing the distribution of linguistic families, dialects, and tribes. It is to be hoped that such a map will form a part of the completed work. E. A. HOOTON.